



Cambridge

Paddler's paradise

It rates as one of the sport's most unusual events — and the Cambridge to Hamilton annual paddle race provides hundreds of spectators and participants with a fun-filled day.

The spectacle of paddlers making their way down the Waikato River on all manner of craft draws visitors to Cambridge for the race start, and gives them chance to come back to the town for post-race celebrations.

If you intend to attend the race, here are some suggestions for your visit:

1 Stay a night in Cambridge

Even if you're not travelling far, make this your chance to stay a night in our town where you'll feel completely at home.

Our town has eight motels and about 75 bed and breakfasts, ensuring you'll get a good night's sleep.

Cambridge's excellent range of bars, cafes and restaurants has something to suit everyone.

For help with accommodation, contact the Cambridge i-SITE Information Centre.

2 Get on a bike

Come back to Cambridge and make a date to visit the Avantidrome, the Home of New Zealand cycling, where you can experience the thrill of riding on a world-class indoor track.

You can hire bikes and book group sessions with coaches to show you how to ride on the cantilevered track.

3 Check out nature

Go for a ramble at nearby Maungatautari mountain, a fenced nature reserve, or the Maungakawa Scenic Reserve. More details and directions are at www.cambridge.co.nz.

4 Find a hobbit

Cambridge is just 21.5km or an 18 minute drive from the world famous Hobbiton where you can enjoy a tour of where Sir Peter Jackson filmed parts of

his *Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* movies.

5 Five lakes and four dams

The Waikato River Trails offer a fun but challenging day out for serious walkers or cyclists who can admire rolling hills, five lakes and four hydro dams on a 100km gravel track.

6 Get in a round of golf

With more than 40 courses within an hour of Cambridge, you'll be spoilt for choice.

You can choose a round at one of the North Island's premier courses, such as Hamilton's St Andrew's, or dodge the sheep while you yarn with locals at a country course such as Hukanui.

7 Or just chill out for a while

Cambridge is the ideal place to take things easy ... take a wander through town and you'll find a range of boutique and specialist shops you won't find in the big city malls.

When is it?

The annual Cambridge to Hamilton Paddle Race is held every September as part of the Hamilton River Festival. Check out www.cambridge.co.nz/event-calendar for the 2014 date.

What is it?

For more than 20 years, paddlers have been making the 23km trip from Cambridge to Hamilton on the Waikato River in one of the most unusual but fun-filled races of the water sports calendar.

This iconic event sees a field of 300 paddlers in kayaks, canoes, waka (Polynesian outrigger canoes), surf skis and on stand-up paddleboards power their way down the country's longest river.

Competitors choose between the 23km course (which starts at the Cambridge Riverside reserve on Dominion Ave) or an 11km stretch of river, launching from the Narrows Landing near Tamahere.

The finish line for both events, which draws serious and fun entries, is at the Waikato Sports Fishing Club/Hamilton City Hawks clubrooms, on Grantham Street, Hamilton.

The event begins in mid-morning and prizegiving usually takes place in mid-afternoon, ensuring participants and friends and family can enjoy getting together before and after the race.

The race is fascinating to watch and spectators find many vantage points to enjoy the spectacle of a flotilla of paddlers, charging down the river.

Plan it now!

Ready to find out more or to book your visit to Cambridge? The Cambridge i-SITE Information Centre can help you plan or book any of the activities described here. We're on the corner of Queen and Victoria Streets, Cambridge — next to the Town Hall.

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www.cambridge.co.nz